Other State's Responses to Email Inquiry About State Geospatial Clearinghouse Arrangements

3/25/02 version

Kansas

We've successfully operated a clearinghouse since 1991. In that period, the budget has never been over $250,000. Depending how you count (grant funded or not), the Data Access and Support Center (DASC) has 6 staff. Two of these are grant supported and the Manager's salary is covered 50% by our Geological Survey. So our base budget really funds 3.5 staff. Refer to http://gisdasc.kgs.ukans.edu/dasc/docsframe.html. Select DASC Special Projects and Annual Reports. Then select FY 2001 Annual Report. This will give you a good summary of DASC services, job responsibilities, etc.

In the past, DASC has been funded through State Water Plan (SWP) dollars. This is a special fund to support water resource management in the state. The GIS program grew out of Natural Resources back in 1989. We've have SWP funding for the DASC and database development projects since 1991.
We are now in a transition period where we are transferring funding for the DASC from the SWP to the Computer Rate Base, which is a collection of charges to state agencies for central computing services, such as network, phone, etc. The computer rate base is not appropriated dollars, but is sustained through cash flow billing to state agencies. Thus, we're spreading the cost of the DASC clearinghouse site across the IT community in state govt.

Really, check out the DASC Annual Report. It has a lot of good stuff that may be of help and check out the web site in general. We think it's a good one.

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Kentucky

Kentucky has a basemap of the basic GIS layers that is handled by our office (just two of us right now). This does not include any data from other state agencies other than our Transportation Cabinet. This same webpage points to some other agencies inside of state government, but since our GIS data is on a "distributed access" model, the idea of a centralized access point has not become a major issue. If you have any other questions just let me know.

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Maryland

We probably won't be representative of where most states want to be. Towson University maintains 2 clearinghouse nodes. One is for the State and the other is for the Chesapeake Bay Program. They put the sites up on a small CAP grant and maintain them on their own funding through the University. I am sure that after the installation, they spend less than ¼ of an FTE on the site. We do not have links to data from the metadata, nor do we host the data. In addition, we don't maintain a seperate web search capability. Finally, we don't have an overwhelming number of metadata forms on the site.

Bill Burgess
Director, Geographic Information Services Division
Maryland Dept of Natural Resources

Minnesota - I

The easiest way for me to respond to your question is to attach a copy of the current Minnesota Clearinghouse work plan (http://www.lmic.state.mn.us/chouse/).

For this year, our clearinghouse activities employ 4.6 FTEs. Page one describes the duties of each and percentage of time allocated to the clearinghouse. The state has recently experienced considerable budget shortfalls that will affect our ability to maintain that level of staffing. I'm gearing up to lose 0.4 FTE soon to retirement with no hope of replacement. There may also be further staff reductions coming as the ramifications of a new budget bill begin to ripple through the agency.

Our current clearinghouse budget is about $385,000; all but $10,000 (grant monies) are allocated from the state's general fund. The lion's share, of course is locked up in salaries and benefits, $335,544. Some prorated services are included in the bottom line - rent and communications, for example - while others are not - computer services are provided from the agency as a whole and are not itemized within each program budget. There is little question that our overall budget will be reduced for fiscal year 2003, but the extent of those cuts has not yet been determined.

Staff size and budget are important characteristics when evaluating state clearinghouse efforts across the country. How each state defines its clearinghouse role will also be a critical consideration. I'm not aware of any nice clean way to categorize clearinghouse functions, but would suggest some description, from "full-service" to "bare bones," be included in your spreadsheet.

The top of page 1 and all of page 2 attempt to describe the way we define our efforts and the goals we have set for our clearinghouse. We like to believe that answering questions over the telephone, publishing data catalogs, providing metadata training and assisting other state agencies in setting up their own clearinghouse nodes are as much a part of the clearinghouse as serving up our own data on the Internet. Maybe that's something akin to the full-service model.

Thanks for taking on this challenge. I'm eager to see the results of your investigation. If there is anything I can do to clarify what's presented here, please don't hesitate to contact me.

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Minnesota - II

The first question to ask is: are you maintaining the data, creating and updating the lines and attributes, or just making it available?

Data maintenance can be costed separately as it is a separate effort from distribution. In our case, we collect the data layers from many other sources and do some standardization, such as getting them into the same coordinate system and tiling scheme. We also try to acquire or create metadata at this phase.

Data distribution can be as simple as a web page/file server/ftp site combination, that is low maintenance. We have elected to use ArcIMS to add a lot more features for the user because our state-wide data sets are so large, users with limited access would have trouble downloading them.

Cataloging the data can take a considerable amount of time, because reading, writing and labeling of tapes and CDs is a manual effort. Some of it requires some GIS knowledge, but some is at a level that a student or clerical help could do it. Since we bought a large filesystem, my approach is to load all files onto the hard disk and inventory and catalog them from there, rather from the original media. In other words, I catalog the files, not the media. This also lets me consolidate onto better media for efficient archiving.

If you have any other questions, feel free to contact me.

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Mississippi

Hope I am not too late responding to your Clearinghouse query. I've been out a while. As you may recall I am still with the Mississippi Automated resource Information System (MARIS- State government GIS coordinating entity). Our website www.maris.state.ms.us is in part a clearinghouse of GIS data. We send data via ftp, and other means for free. There are about 80-90 coverages, some developed by us, some by others. The site is generally maintained by two people, one who is the webmaster, one who maintains the data base of coverages. Both do so part time. I would say that the site requires 1.5 FTE staff to keep updated and respond to user needs on a timely basis. Its biggest liability which we will be correcting soon is not having FGDC compliant matadata. We do have a "Data Catalog" that provides some systematic descriptions of coverages, including a data dictionary of each coverage,but it needs to be upgraded.

We average about 6,000 logins a month and several thousand files delivered on request.

The data base is funded in part via general funds (staff salaries) and by way of self-generated funds. The latter includes all hardware/software/web design-contractual needs.

Do not hesitate to give a holler if you need anything else.

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Texas

The Texas Natural Resources Information System (TNRIS) manages the state's geospatial data clearinghouse and development of the state's framework data (http://www.tnris.state.tx.us/). TNRIS was created by statute in 1967 and operates with a staff of 20 as a division of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). TNRIS also provides technical support and training to state, regional and local government entities. TNRIS also operates the Borderlands Information Center to provide focused geospatial information on the Texas / Mexico Border. Funding for TNRIS comes primarily from State general revenue funds with supplemental funds from federal and private sector grants and cost recovery fees for data duplication and training services.

Texas Clearinghouse and it's Divisions info is as follows. TNRIS operates primarily off of general revenue funds supplemented by State, Federal, Local grant funds and service fees for copies and distribution. They recently received permission to sell advertising on their web site. See you in Dallas.

Texas Natural Resources Information System
Director
Accountant / Book Keeper
Approximately 5-10 paid interns at any time

Borderlands Information Center
Manager
Administrator
GIS Technician

Information Services
Manager
Librarian
Database Administrator
Webmaster
Admin. Assistant

StratMap
State Cartographer
Planner
Contracts Attorney

Research and Distribution
Manager
Librarian
Librarian

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Vermont

VCGI has four people that manage the technical aspects of the clearinghouse.

1 - dba/web developer/sr. project manager
2 - project managers/systems managers
1 - GIS Tech/special data request manager

But, they do not do clearinghouse work full time. We also do data development projects, standards development and other grant work whenever possible. I would estimate that full time it would require 2 to 3 technical personnel to do clearinghouse work exclusively in our situation. There are two important caveats here. First, this is for maintaining an existing clearinghouse. I believe startup may require more people depending upon your plans. Second we do very little metatdata development. We only do it when we create the data or someone begs us. We require most data suppliers to take care of the metadata before they send the data to us. That reduces our personnel needs (and improves sanity), improves the accuracy of the metadata and gives the community some respect for the process of making the data available. (Of course it also means that some data is still waiting to be made available because no one wants to do the metadata but there is very little of that.)

VCGI uses 3 more people as additional support. One is myself, the Exec. Director. The second is an Outreach coordinator. The Outreach Coordinator really works for the GIS community of the state as a whole in coordinating communication, information sharing, educational development and similar activities. The last position in our organization is a business manager. Because we are a public non-profit and not under the State Administration we have some additional business responsibilities. The business manager also serves as human resource professional, accountant and even GIS tech quite often.

I know there are some differences out there. Some clearinghouses host all or most of the data while some simply point to data holdings. Some have more advanced web capabilities than others. So some breakdown of the staff would be necessary, for example 1 database administrator, 1 web programmer, 1 manager etc.   I also would be interested to know if clearinghouses are most commonly funded by state general fund, or if they actually have to produce additional income by providing services.

VCGI hosts all of our clearinghouse data on our own servers. We are about 50% funded through the state. The money does not come out of the general fund however. We are one of a group of state resources (Regional Planning Commissions, NRCS Soil Mapping, etc.) that are funded through a statewide Property Transfer Tax (if you want more details on that I can send them to you). Every year I go before the legislative Appropriations Committee and advocate for VCGI's percentage of the projected PTT tax revenues for the upcoming year. The rest, about 50%, of our funding comes through grants and projects. Without it we would be sorely hurting.

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Washington

1. Staff supporting state clearinghouse
   a) Number of staff positions: *no assigned staff - sponsoring partnership provides staff*

   b) Position titles or short job duties

      - *Server administrator - maintains Isite environment and provides user accounts (approx 120hrs/yr)*

      - *Clearinghouse user point of contact (primary) - fields questions from clearinghouse users (approx 40 hrs / yr)*

      - *Metadata & Clearinghouse outreach - metadata and clearinghouse training and promotion (first three years approx 225 hrs/yr - last two years 50/ yr))*

2. Funding
   a) amount – *there is no dedicated clearinghouse funding - initial metadata outreach about 35% funded through FGDC grants*
   b) source (general fund, fees, combination with rough percentage):

3. Data hosting
   a) mainly point to data residing elsewhere: *Yes, but looking for the clearinghouse to move to some form of 'b'*
   b) host most or a considerable amount of data on clearinghouse servers:

4. Other services provided by "clearinghouse" or "data access and support center":
   a) little or no additional data support services provided beyond data access   *(XX)*
   b) limited additional data support provided beyond data access
   c) a fair amount of data support (reprojection, clipping, etc.) provided beyond data access
   d) a considerable amount of data support (technical support for application, application development, Internet Mapping, etc.) provided beyond access

5. Administrative home for clearinghouse
   a) state natural resources department
   b) state information management services
   c) state library
   d) state dept of transportation
   e) e) other:____   *the clearinghouse operates under a three-way partnership between state DIS, University of Washington (Library & College of Forest Resources) and WAGIC*

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